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TAGS: UNDP, EAID, AF

SUBJECT: CERP 0008: (UNDP) THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM: EVALUATION OF ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 72386

1. SUMMARY: UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IS COORDINATOR OF UN
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN BUT HIS EFFECTIVENESS IS
IMPAIRED BY INCREASING AUTONOMY OF SOME AGENCIES AND BY FREQUENT
LACK OF FOCUS BY GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN ON REAL PRIORITIES
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ASSISTANCE. THE UNDP'S FINANCIAL CRISIS, WHILE SLOWING THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROJECTS, MAY ALSO HAVE THE USEFUL RESULT OF FORCING THE GOA AND UNDP TO RE-EVALUATE PROGRAMS, ELIMINATE MARGINAL PROJECTS, AND MORE CLEARLY DEFINE PRIORITIES.

THE MAJOR PROBLEM LIMITING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS THE DIFFUSION OF PROJECTS INTO TOO MANY SECTORS. THIS IS PARTIALLY DUE TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOA THAT UNDP IS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR ANY CONCEIVABLE PURPOSE. UNDP HEADQUARTERS COULD BE HELPFUL IN PROVIDING PROGRAM GUIDANCE TO COUNTER THIS PHILOSOPHY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FOLLOWING IS KEYED TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN REFTEL:

A. ROLE OF UNDP IN UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM. UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATION OF UN AGENCIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND REPRESENTS MOST AGENCIES IN OFFICIAL CONTACTS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA). AN EXCEPTION IS THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) WHICH, THROUGH ITS REGIONAL OFFICES, OPERATES SEMI-INDEPENDENTLY OF RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE. FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (FAO) PLANS TO SET UP REGIONAL OFFICES MAY ALSO LESSEN UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S ABILITY TO MONITOR AND COORDINATE PROGRAMS ALTHOUGH, AT PRESENT, UNDP/FAO COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN IS GOOD.

US MISSION'S VIEW IS THAT TREND FOR INCREASED AUTONOMY OF UN AGENCIES SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED AND UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S POSITION AS COORDINATOR OF ALL UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED.

MINISTRY OF PLANNING IS NORMAL CONTACT POINT IN GOA FOR RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE. HE HAS WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH DEPUTY MINISTER OF PLANNING TO DISCUSS UNDP PROGRAM. HOWEVER, INTRA-MINISTERIAL COORDINATION IS FREQUENTLY LACKING AND REQUESTS FOR UNDP ASSISTANCE ARE OFTEN TRANSMITTED DIRECTLY TO UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. LIKEWISE, UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES HAVE AT TIMES ACTED UNILATERALLY WITH GOA IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS, THEN TURNED TO UNDP FOR RESOURCES. THESE INDEPENDENT ACTIONS BY BOTH MINISTRIES AND OTHER UN AGENCIES HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF FRICTION WITH UNDP.

COORDINATION BETWEEN IBRD AND UNDP HAS BEEN WEAK. UNDP AND IBRD ARE PRESENTLY COOPERATING ON SEVERAL PROJECTS, THE COMMUNICATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETWEEN THE TWO AGENCIES IS IMPROVING, BUT UNDP OFFICIALS STILL EXPRESS SOME CHAGRIN THAT THEY ARE NOT INVOLVED IN IBRD PROJECTS OF INTEREST TO UNDP AT AN EARLIER AND MORE FORMATIVE STAGE.

B. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE. THERE IS NO FORMAL MECHANISM FOR COORDINATION OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN. UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE CITES UNRESPONSIVENESS OF GOA AND SOME AID-GIVING COUNTRIES AS BARRIERS

IN IMPROVING COORDINATION.

MINISTRY OF PLANNING IS GOA AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BUT IT DEALS WITH EACH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS A SEPARATE ENTITY, AND UNDP AND BILATERAL DONORS ARE FREQUENTLY NOT WELL-INFORMED ABOUT REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAMS OF OTHERS. USAID ONCE ATTEMPTED TO SET UP SYSTEM FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS OF REPS FROM UNDP AND OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, BUT GOA DISCOURAGED UN PARTICIPATION IN SUCH MEETINGS, AND EFFORT CAME TO NAUGHT. NEVERTHELESS, AID DIRECTOR AND UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE ARE IN FREQUENT CONTACT, AND NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF DUPLICATION OF EFFORT AMONG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS HAVE OCCURRED.

C. FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS. THE 1976 UNDP BUDGET FOR AFGHANISTAN IS \$4.9 MILLION PLUS \$1.5 MILLION FROM A SPECIAL MEASURES FUND. IN 1977 THE BUDGET IS SET AT ABOUT \$5.1 MILLION WITH NO ADDITIONAL MONEY COMING FROM A SPECIAL MEASURES FUND. UNDP IS HOPEFUL THAT FUNDS IN TRUST, FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS WILL INCREASE IN 1977, THEREBY AMELIORATING THE DECREASE IN THE UNDP BUDGET.

THE AUSTERITY MEASURES FOR 1976, PLUS THE ANTICIPATED DECREASE IN RESOURCES FOR 1977, ARE HAVING SERIOUS EFFECTS ON THE UNDP'S ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT NEW PROGRAMS. 1976 RESOURCES ARE SUFFICIENT FOR ON-GOING PROJECTS AND TO BEGIN A FEW NEW ONES. HOWEVER, ABOUT A DOZEN APPROVED PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE HAVE BEEN POSTPONED OR DELAYED INDEFINITELY UNTIL A CLEARER VIEW OF FUTURE RESOURCES CAN BE OBTAINED. A NUMBER OF PROJECTS SCHEDULED FOR THE 1973-77 CYCLE WILL NOW BE DELAYED UNTIL THE SECOND FIVE YEAR CYCLE (1977-1981).

D. COUNTRY PROGRAMMING. COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FOR THE 1977-1981 CYCLE HAS BEEN DELAYED BY UNDP DUE TO UNCERTAINTY OVER RESOURCES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AVAILABLE. THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE REGARDS THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMING EXERCISE AS A MEANS OF EXAMINING, IN COOPERATION WITH THE GOA, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ON-GOING PROJECTS, THE DETERMINATION OF NEW PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING CYCLE, AND THE ELIMINATION AND/OR CONSOLIDATION OF PROJECTS OF MARGINAL IMPACT OR SUCCESS. UNDP HOPES TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS (AT PRESENT, NEARLY 100 IN PROGRESS, OR PLANNED) AND STRENGTHEN THOSE REMAINING.

THE UNDP IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD LIKE TO SEE A GREATER SECTORAL CONCENTRATION IN AREAS OF PROVEN RESULTS OR PROMISE, BUT COMMENTED THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT FROM HEADQUARTERS. THE CURRENT, EXTREMELY DIFFUSE PGFTAHEB RBDO, #AT LEAST IN PART, TO THE CONCEPTION BY THE GOA THAT UNDP FUNDS BELONG TO IT AND THAT UNDP IS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE GRAB-BAG OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EVERY CONCEIVABLE PURPOSE. THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE UNDP

MAY, AS A USEFUL BY-PRODUCT, FORCE THE GOA AND UNDP INTO CLEARER AND MORE PRECISE FORMULATIONS OF THE PRIORITIES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THEY WOULD LIKE THE UNDP TO PROVIDE.

E. PROJECT EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION. THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE REGARDS THE TRIPARTITE PROJECT REVIEW SYSTEM AS USEFUL. A PROJECT REVIEW IS ORDINARILY DONE EVERY SIX MONTHS. THE REVIEW PROCESS HAS NOT YET PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN ELIMINATING MARGINAL PROJECTS, BUT IT HAS HELPED ESTABLISH BENCH MARKS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND HAS RESULTED IN PROGRAM CHANGES TO STRENGTHEN PROJECTS. THE UNDP ALSO USES

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THE TRIPARTITE REVIEW PROCESS AS A MEANS OF ENCOURAGING GOA OFFICIALS TO TAKE NEEDED ACTIONS ON THEIR SIDE TO GET PROJECTS MOVING.

TIMELINESS IN EXECUTION OF PROJECTS IS A PROBLEM FOR ALL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN. IN ADDITION TO LONG LEAD TIME OF UNDP, THE GOA TAKES INORDINATE TIME IN APPROVING EXPERTS FOR WORK ON PROJECTS, DESIGNATING CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIPS, AND PROVIDING TRAINEES.

F. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS. NEITHER UNDP NOR WE KNOW WHAT "RECENT CHANGES IN FORMAT FOR UNDP PROJECT DOCUMENTATIONS- MEANS.

G. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT. THE ATTITUDES OF THIS CONSERVATIVE, MUSLIM COUNTRY HAVE PRECLUDED THE EXTENSIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PROJECTS. THE UNDP WORKS IN AREAS SUCH AS FAMILY PLANNING, BUT HAS NO

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PROJECTS DIRECTED AT THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY, NOR ARE ANY PLANNED.

3. FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF APPRAISAL OF UNDP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT SECTORS.

COMMUNICATIONS. THE UNDP HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE 1968, AND ITS PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL. AFGHAN COUNTERPARTS HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND THE UNDP HAD HOPED TO PHASE OUT IN 1977. HOWEVER, THE GOA WOULD LIKE THE UNDP TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAM UNTIL 1981 WITH EMPHASIS ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR INSTALLATION OF MICROWAVE SYSTEMS AND TELEVISION.

EDUCATION. UNESCO/UNDP EDUCATION PROJECT WILL CONSUME ABOUT 15 PERCENT OF UNDP'S TOTAL 1977 BUDGET IN AFGHANISTAN. IN GENERAL, THE UNDP IS DISAPPOINTED WITH MOST OF THE EDUCATION PROJECTS. USAID VIEW IS THAT UNPROJECTS ARE TOO SMALL AND DIVERSE AND THAT UNDP'S TENDENCY TO DABBLE IN A MULTITUDE OF ACTIVITIES HAS THE HARMFUL EFFECT OF BLOCKING OTHER DONORS, INCLUDING USAID, FROM CONSIDERING STRONG PROGRAMS IN PRIORITY AREAS.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT. RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A HIGH PRIORITY AREA FOR UNDP ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN. IN THE PAST THE UNDP HAS DELPED TO STRENGTHEN PLANNING; IT NOW HOPES TO BRING IN SEVERAL ENGINEERS TO IMPROVE PROJECT EXECUTION. USAID VIEW IS THAT, WITH RECENT CHANGE IN PROJECT MANAGER, UNDP EFFECTIVENESS IS MUCH IMPROVED OVER POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE PAST. UNDP EFFORTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMPLEMENT USAID ACTIVITIES.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. REGARDED AS AN AREA OF PROMISE BY UNDP, PERHAPS DESERVING MORE ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE. IN PARTICULAR, UNDP

WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST IN THE CREATION OF A NEW OFFICE IN THE PRIME MINISTRY DEALING WITH LABOR, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

INDUSTRIAL. UNDP HAS THREE PROJECTS IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, AND NONE HAS ACHIEVED ANY NOTABLE SUCCESS. HOWEVER, A FIRST-RATE TEAM IS ATTACHED TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK, AND, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE TEAM'S WORK, THE PROJECT HAS BEEN USEFUL. IN VIEW OF THE LIMITED PROSPECTS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN, THE AREA OF CONCENTRATION BY UNDP WILL BE SHIFTED TO ASSISTANCE TO PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES.

AGRICULTURE. THERE ARE A GREAT NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN THE AGRI-CULTURE SECTOR. VETERINARY SERVICES HAS BEEN GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND UNDP HOPES TO STRENGTHEN AND FOCUS ITS PROGRAMS IN THIS FIELD. UNDP IS COOPERATING WITH IBRD IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LOAN TO THE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BANK AND HAS A GOOD TEAM IN THE BANK. OTHER PROJECTS IN FORESTRY, PLANT PROTECTION, IRRIGATION, VITICULTURE, AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING HAVE HAD VARYING DEGREES OF SUCCESS.

HEALTH. WHO, UNICEF, AND UNFPA CONTRIBUTE TO WIDE SPECTRUM OF HEALTH PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN INCLUDING MALARIA CONTROL, SMALLPOX ERADICATION, POTABLE WATER PROJECTS, DEMOGRAPHY, AND SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT AND DRUGS. OVERALL, THE SECTOR INCLUDES SOME EFFECTIVE PROJECTS BUT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE HAMPERED BY LACK OF PLANNING ON AFGHAN SIDE AND THE PASSIVE ROLE OF UN ADVISORS.

PLANNING. UNDP IS ASSISTING WITH PLANNING IN SEVERAL MINISTRIES, INCLUDING THE MINISTRIES OF PLANNING, AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC WORKS. UNDP BELIEVES THAT PLANNING IS A PARTICULARLY WEAK ACTIVITY IN MANY GOA AGENCIES.

4. CONCLUSION: UNDP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN IS SPREAD TOO THINLY IN TOO MANY SECTORS. THE RETRENCHMENT OF UNDP MAY NOT BE WITHOUT BENEFIT AS IT MAY FORCE AN ASSESSMENT AND REAPPRAISAL OF ASSISTANCE PRIORITIES.

AT PRESENT, THE PENCHANT OF THE GOA FOR CALLING FOR UNDP ASSISTANCE IN MANY FIELDS (AND THE INTERESTS OF UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IN KEEPING THEIR PROGRAMS ALIVE) IMPAIRS THE UNDP'S ABILITY TO FOCUS ON PRIORITIES. THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE APPEARS TO HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO TURN THE GOA'S ATTENTION TO A COORDINATED TECHNICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSISTANCE EFFORT AND TO ELIMINATE MARGINAL AND POORLY-CONCEIVED
PROJECTS. HOWEVER, AT THIS TIME, IT SEEMS IMPERATIVE TO US THAT UNDP
HEADQUARTERS ALSO MUST TAKE A GREATER ROLE IN HELPING PROVIDE
PROGRAM GUIDANCE TO COUNTER THE PREVALENT GRAB-BAG PHILOSOPHY
OF MANY RECIPIENT COUNTRIES. END CONCLUSION.

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